



West Nile Virus Newsletter

This is the second year of a regular Department of Health (DOH) West Nile virus (WNV) communication tool. This electronic newsletter will be provided routinely throughout the summer to keep our partners informed about WNV in Washington State, as well as information from other areas. In this first issue of the season, we would like to review activities of 2003, alert you to some of the updated materials, and inform you of other changes.

Changing Faces and Changing Places

Some staffing changes for the WNV project have occurred for 2004.

- Janice Adair, Environmental Health Assistant Secretary, will be the WNV executive sponsor replacing Bill White, who is now serving DOH as the Deputy Secretary;
- Jo Hofmann, M.D., and Mira Leslie, D.V.M., will lead the Communicable Disease and Epidemiology effort; Jude Van Buren has replaced Jac Davies as the Assistant Secretary for the Division of Epidemiology, Health Statistics and Public Health Labs;
- Public Health Laboratory services will be led by Jinxin Hu and Elicia Coyne;
- Tom Besser, D.V.M., will coordinate animal and mosquito testing by the Washington Animal Disease Diagnostic Laboratory at Washington State University;
- Maryanne Guichard will continue to provide program management and guidance for the environmental health effort;
- John Grendon has left the Zoonotic Disease Program and moved to the U.S. Department of Agriculture. A search is underway to fill the vacancy that John leaves;
- Tom Gibbs will fill the role of WNV coordinator for environmental samples and the horse and dead bird surveillance contact;
- Jo Marie Brauner will be the lead staff person on mosquito surveillance;
- Anne Duffy will head the publications, data, and Web site updates;
- Ben Hamilton will coordinate NPDES permit activities; and
- Cindi Free will provide support and data entry.

West Nile Virus Highlights for 2003 in Washington State

Surveillance Activities:

- Surveillance efforts in 2003 were substantially greater than in 2002. All counties were equipped for mosquito and dead bird surveillance. Last year's surveillance included:
 - Birds: 906 tested statewide. All were negative.
 - Mosquitoes: 2,370 mosquito-trapping events collected 89,574 mosquitoes for identification. Surveillance efforts revealed mosquito species identified for the first time in 21 counties.
 - Horses: 104 symptomatic horses tested with negative results.
 - Humans: 110 reports of illness suspected to be West Nile infections were investigated. Of these, 13 patients (12%) were identified as having confirmed or probable WNV infections, and all were acquired as a result of exposure to mosquitoes outside Washington. Eight cases were Washington residents who were exposed during travel, and five were residents of other states who became ill and were diagnosed in Washington. There were no human West Nile infections acquired in Washington.
- In-state WNV laboratory capacity was developed:
 - Starting in May 2003, the DOH Public Health Laboratories were ready to perform diagnostic testing on human specimens for mosquito borne diseases. Over the summer and fall, more than 250 specimens were tested for WNV and the closely related St. Louis Encephalitis virus.
 - The Washington Animal Disease Diagnostic Laboratories at WSU performed WNV testing on more than 900 avian and equine specimens.
- Surveillance data is reported to CDC's ArboNet. ArboNet is the national, electronic surveillance system established by CDC to track reports of WNV infections and other mosquito-borne diseases.

Internal and External Communications:

- The WNV Resource Guide (<http://www.doh.wa.gov/ehp/ts/Zoo/WNV/ResourceGuide.pdf>) was produced for the first time to assist in interagency contact and coordination. It includes contact information for state, federal and local agencies.
- A biweekly WNV electronic newsletter containing articles on the most recent WNV activities around the state, as well as nationally, was sent to a list of several hundred public health officials, mosquito control districts, and other partners.
- The DOH Web site was enhanced and served as the primary state government Web site for WNV information in Washington. (<http://www.doh.wa.gov/ehp/ts/Zoo/WNV/WNV.html>)

- DOH WNV Communication Plan was developed.
- Guidelines for the clinical management, diagnostic testing, and reporting of suspected human WNV infection were distributed to more than 19,000 healthcare providers across the state.

Public Education:

- New educational materials were developed including brochures, envelope stuffers, and information on using repellants. Some materials were translated into Spanish.
- DOH established a WNV hotline with recorded messages in English and Spanish about the latest details on WNV in Washington, as well as prevention messages.
- Four public service announcements (two English, two Spanish) were distributed to radio stations throughout Washington.
- State and local health department staff gave WNV presentations around the state to a wide variety of audiences. These presentations emphasized prevention measures, as well as clinical and general WNV information.

Control Measures:

- Revisions to the Mosquito-borne Disease Response Plan occurred at the end of the season and the revised edition is posted on the DOH Web site (<http://www.doh.wa.gov/ehp/ts/Zoo/WNV/WAArboviralRespPlan.pdf>). Changes included replacing risk categories with “alert levels” and clarifying the agencies’ roles and responsibilities.
- Mosquito control measures were encouraged throughout the state. DOH assisted local entities by applying for coverage under the state’s NPDES permit (general permit for aquatic mosquito control). DOH then extended coverage to 76 applicants including cities, counties, mosquito control districts, state agencies, and private entities (businesses, landowners, homeowner associations).

DOH is continuing to offer an extension of its permit coverage to entities that intend to control mosquito larvae in surface waters of the state. Commercial pesticide applicators are now allowed to apply for permit coverage to treat mosquito larvae on private or publicly owned water bodies. Allowing commercial pest control businesses permit coverage is intended to make the permit process more efficient and allow for a quick response to a mosquito problem if needed.

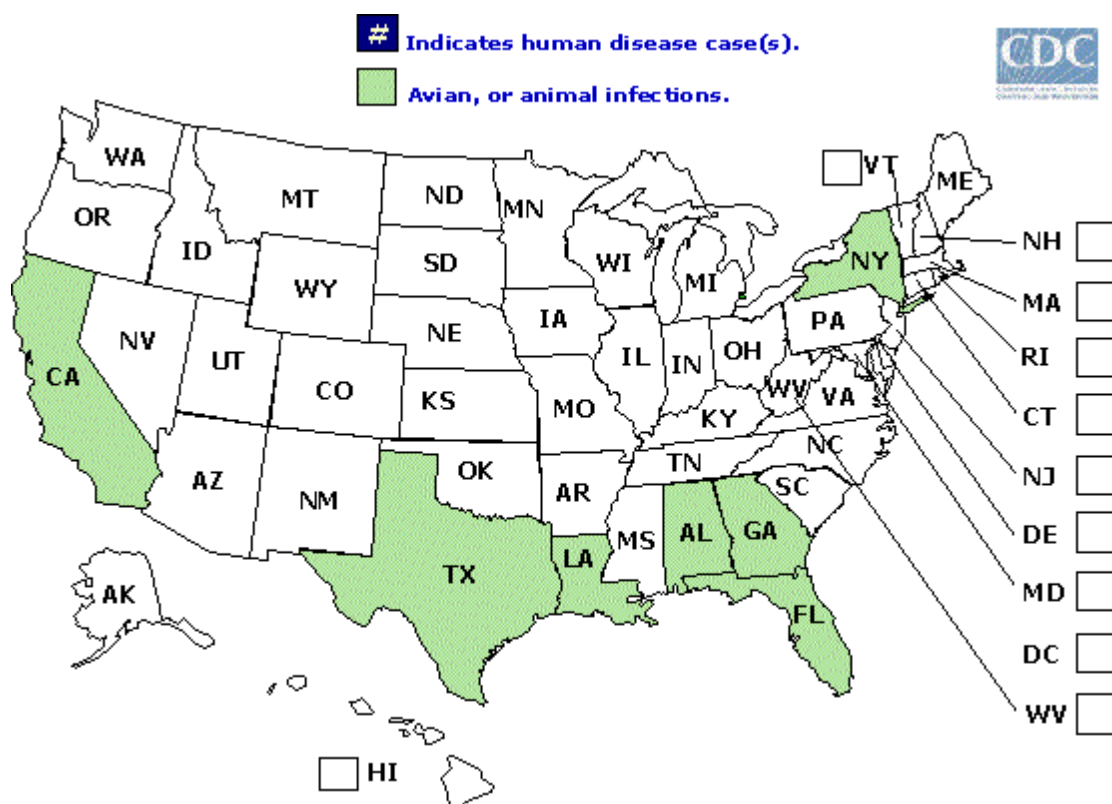
To view the permit, the best management practices for mosquito control, and the online application for permit coverage, go to <http://www.doh.wa.gov/ehp/ts/Zoo/WNV/Permit.html>, and contact Ben Hamilton at (360) 236-3364 or benjamin.hamilton@doh.wa.gov for questions.

National Surveillance News

In 2003, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention ArboNet system received reports of 9,858 human cases of WNV infections in 45 states. Of the 9,858 cases, 6,829 (69%) were reported as West Nile fever (milder disease), 2,863 (29%) were reported as West Nile meningitis or encephalitis (*neuroinvasive disease*) and 166 (2%) were clinically unspecified. In 2003, there were 262 reported WNV-related fatalities; clinical and demographic data were available on 258. The median age of these 258 decedents was 76 years (range: 1 month – 97 years). The breakdown of human cases by state can be seen at http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dvbid/westnile/surv&controlCaseCount03_detailed.htm

Also in 2003, there were reports from 46 states of 10,200 infected corvids, 1,866 other birds, 5,251 mammals (predominately horses); 8,385 mosquito pools that tested positive for WNV.

As of April 7, 2004, seven states had reported early West Nile activity in birds or animals (see map). The Ohio Department of Health also issued a press release describing a probable human case. As of April 9, 2004, there have been 3 horses, 14 corvids and 17 other birds positive for WNV in seven states.



Article Submission

We are interested in receiving articles for future publications of the WNV newsletter. Please submit articles to Tom Gibbs, tom.gibbs@doh.wa.gov.

Community Comments

Let us hear your comments on this newsletter, your needs, or things you would like to see, by sending them to Maryanne Guichard, (360) 236-3391 or maryanne.guichard@doh.wa.gov.

WNV Web Resources

Washington State Department of Health www.doh.wa.gov/wnv
Center for Disease Control <http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dvbid/westnile/>
Washington State University Cooperative Extension <http://wnv.wsu.edu/>
Cornell University, Center for Environment <http://www.cfe.cornell.edu/erap/WNV>
Washington State Department of Agriculture
<http://agr.wa.gov/FoodAnimal/AnimalHealth/Diseases/WestNileVirus/default.htm>

DOH Contact List for West Nile Virus

General Public Toll-Free Hotline 1-866-78VIRUS

Publications: Brochures/Response Plan/Fact Sheets

Laura Harper, (360) 236-3380, or laura.harper@doh.wa.gov.

Surveillance: Mosquito

Jo Marie Brauner, (360) 236-3064, or jomarie.brauner@doh.wa.gov.

Surveillance: Dead bird surveillance, horses, case reporting, laboratory assistance, and general WNV response

Tom Gibbs, (360) 236-3060, or tom.gibbs@doh.wa.gov.

NPDES: Training, technical assistance

Ben Hamilton, (360) 236-3364, or benjamin.hamilton@doh.wa.gov.

WNV in Humans: Clinical information, case reporting, and laboratory testing

Call your local health jurisdiction or DOH Communicable Disease Epidemiology,
(206) 361-2914 or (877) 539-4344.

Assistance with news releases and media response

Donn Moyer, (360) 236-4076, or donn.moyer@doh.wa.gov.

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To subscribe to this newsletter

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